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ABSTRACT

Recognition of the range of potential benefits linked to out-of-school experiences has led to a rapid expansion of out-of-school time opportunities across the United States. This guide outlines an approach for bringing the community together to meet out-of-school time needs of children, youth, and families. Launched in 1994, the MOST (Making the MOST of Out-of-School Time) Initiative created a model for improving and broadening out-of-school time opportunities. The guide begins with a description of the origin of the MOST Initiative and important elements of the system: (1) linkages of working groups for joint planning, priority setting, and information sharing; (2) regular creation of new working relationships, collaborations, and networks to broaden the system; (3) nurturance of leadership within the out-of-school time community; (4) a variety of programs, experiences, and opportunities; (5) high quality programming; (6) training and professional opportunities for staff; and (7) a community infrastructure including funding strategies, coordination of training, long-term planning, advocacy, and outreach, and accountability. The guide uses three methods to explain how to build an out-of-school time system. First, an outline presents a step-by-step process in three stages: (1) planning (establishing leadership, engaging community, and developing principles); (2) taking stock (community needs assessment); and (3) making it happen (setting the agenda, planning for sustainability, visibility, and sustaining change). Second, action tips are offered through recommendations based on the successes gained and challenges encountered during the seven years of the MOST Initiative. Third, MOST city models are used to illustrate how Boston, Chicago, and Seattle interpreted the process. The guide concludes with a list of print and organizational resources and information on the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (KB)

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A Community's Guide to Making the Most of Out-of-School Time

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MOST

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Working Together for Children and Families:

A Community's Guide to Making the Most of Out-of-School Time

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MOST

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Thank you...

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— Brooks Harvey & Joyce Shortt

Introduction

The public is increasingly beginning to recognize and value the positive effects that high-quality out-of-school time experiences have on children, youth, and communities. The range of potential benefits linked to these experiences, such as better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades, and conduct in school (Baker and Witt, 1996; Kahne et al., 1999; Posner & Vandell, 1999), has led to unprecedented levels of public and private funding toward the rapid expansion of out-of-school time opportunities across the United States.

With these enhanced opportunities for expansion of services comes a corresponding need to help communities build high-quality programs, practices, and staff, and to plan for sustainability. The MOST approach, outlined in this guide, provides a method for bringing the whole community together to meet the out-of-school time needs of children, youth, and families.

"When I see people and organizations that were unaware of each other before putting their heads together through their association with MOST, coming up with ways to share swimming pools, vans and buses, training facilities and human resources, there is evidence that we are not just creating more programs for children and families, but energizing the people who work in these programs, which strengthens the entire system."

– Leonette Coates,
Chicago MOST

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About the Guide

The MOST (Making the MOST of Out-of-School Time) Initiative was launched in 1994 in an effort to create an enduring model for improving and broadening out-of-school time opportunities for children, youth, and families. The purpose of this guide is to share with readers the MOST Initiative's unique approach to building a community-based, collaborative out-of-school time system. Now in its seventh and final year of funding from the Wallace Readers Digest Funds, the MOST Initiative has made a tremendous impact on out-of-school time in the three MOST cities: Boston, Chicago, and Seattle. Each city has strengthened the fabric of leadership, advocacy, and services in its communities and will continue to meet the evolving needs of families by building on the accomplishments of MOST.

This guide uses three methods to explain how to build an out-of-school time system using the MOST approach:

- An outline takes the reader through a step-by-step process in three stages: Planning, Taking Stock, and Making it Happen. It is important to remember that although the process is linear on paper, each reader will need to modify the sequence or application of strategies to meet individual, program, or community needs.
- Action tips are recommendations based on the successes gained and challenges encountered during the seven years of the MOST Initiative.
- MOST city models illustrate how each MOST city interpreted the process and provide the reader with a sampling of their activities.

The intended audience for this guide includes those associated with child-serving agencies, advocacy groups, community- and faith-based organizations, schools, foundations, and municipalities.

The Origin of the MOST Initiative

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), part of the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College, opened its doors in 1979 in response to the growing needs of working parents and communities across the nation for access to child care for school-age children. At the time, there was little national attention being paid to the development of after-school opportunities for children. NIOST's School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual was published in 1982 to answer the call for information on after-school program start-up and management.

By the late 1980s, the demand for programs was still great, and school-age child care was struggling to emerge as a distinct field of its own. The need for program improvement and field-building efforts had become evident. However, the overall lack of cohesiveness in the field proved to be a significant barrier in improving program quality and staff development—two components NIOST viewed as essential to strengthening the field and improving the quality of services.

Because of the strong link between well-trained, qualified staff and high-quality programming (Whitebook, Philips & Howes, 1998), NIOST's vision to unify the field and improve quality was initially centered on building a professional development system for school-age child care providers. However, after NIOST studied and visited the dynamic, community-supported child care systems in Scandinavia, the institute's vision broadened.

According to Michelle Seligson, founder of NIOST, "exposure to the Danish child care system stimulated NIOST's thinking about the importance of local participation and control in the design and development of after-school programs. In Denmark and Sweden, where child care has been a more normative labor force issue than in the United States, local municipalities regularly survey the community to see which child care needs require their attention. Parents and staff participate in this process, making sure that core values are addressed in whatever policy and program solutions are proposed. There is both a sense of partnership among all the stakeholders and a legitimate claim on financial resources provided to the municipal government by the state, through taxes and other revenue streams.

In addition to local policy on developing programs, the Scandinavian system also emphasizes training for

Photo: National Institute on Out-of-School Time

providers. Training institutions, called fritidshem (free-time homes) seminariums, prepare adults for caregiving careers over a three-year period. These state and locally supported institutions work closely with the day care centers and after-school programs that will ultimately employ the trained caregivers. This relatively seamless system has its own built-in quality control, since the caregivers are unionized and work closely with the municipality."

When NIOST decided to try to adapt this model to the United States, it became clear that US child care providers were lacking the benefit of the pervasive, state-supported child care infrastructure of Scandinavia. There was still limited understanding about supply and demand; no unified philosophy or practice existed among practitioners; program staff turnover was high and training was inconsistent; programs worked in isolation of one another; and little information was being disseminated to parents about access to programs, transportation, and affordability.

Realizing that a singular focus on professional development would be premature and inadequate, NIOST applied what it had learned in Scandinavia about the value of local participation and collaboration to create the more comprehensive, systems-building, MOST Initiative. In this context, professional development and program improvement could take place in a climate prepared to invest in meeting the needs of staff, programs, and children.

Launching the Initiative

In 1994, NIOST and Wallace Readers Digest Fund (WRDF) launched the MOST Initiative by selecting cities to receive one-year planning grants. During this planning year, community-based coalitions developed action plans to address the following national goals for out-of-school time programs:

- Start and/or improve programs.
- Increase the number of children served.
- Increase professional development and in-service training opportunities for providers.
- Increase public awareness of the need for services.
- Develop resources to sustain the project's goals.

The action plans were developed through an intensive collaborative process that allowed community members to assess needs, develop strategies, and generate substantial matching funds. In May 1995, three cities received grants of $1.2 million each, for implementation of their three-year plan. Boston, Chicago, and Seattle were chosen to implement their plans, in part because at the outset each city reflected some distinct strengths: a history of collaborative efforts, com-

munication among stakeholders, and strategic planning. In fact, the participating cities were chosen by the WRDF on the basis of their potential to implement a citywide initiative (Halpern et al., 2000).

During the MOST planning phase, each lead organization established and led a new task force, made up of diverse stakeholders (e.g., school-age program administrators and staff, city officials, parents, large youth-serving agencies, religious organizations, higher education institutions, and public schools), to focus explicitly on building the out-of-school time system. The stakeholders worked together in volunteer committees and working groups to set priorities for use of MOST funds, do joint planning, share information, coordinate activities, forge new links, and begin to develop citywide strategies for the challenges facing after-school programs as a collective. (Halpern et al., 2000). Although each city worked toward similar goals, their action plans were quite different, reflecting the unique needs, priorities, and resources of each city. This guide demonstrates the process through which the cities carried out their action plans and made out-of-school time a widespread community priority.

"The mission of MOST is to create awareness at the level of the community, neighborhood and city that children's out-of-school time is very important to their development, [and] that it's important to parents, schools and businesses and the community as a whole."

– Michelle Seligson, Founder of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time

What is the MOST Initiative?

How do we make the most of out-of-school time for our nation's children? This is the question at the heart of the MOST Initiative, a seven-year, multimillion dollar project supported by WRDF and designed in partnership with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. MOST seeks to improve the quality and availability of programming for children and youth in Boston, Chicago, and Seattle during the hours they are not in school. The architecture of MOST was based on a shared vision to create collaborative structures within communities that would assess needs, develop strategies, and share resources to improve the quality and availability of after-school programs.

The keystone of the Initiative is its unique system-building approach in which each city's universe of after-school programs, resource and support organizations, schools, cultural and religious institutions, colleges, parents, funders, and regulatory agencies connect and work together toward a common goal to meet the needs of children, youth, and families.

This community-based, collaborative strategy creates the opportunity to develop local capacity to provide leadership, resources, and commitment and ultimately to build a sustainable infrastructure capable of supporting an out-of-school time system.

Elements of the MOST system

- A variety of stakeholders in the out-of-school time system are linked in committees and working groups, for joint planning, priority setting, and information sharing.
- New working relationships, collaborations, and networks are created regularly to broaden the reach of the system.
- Leadership is nurtured within the out-of-school time community, by involving a variety of people and organizations in the governance and implementation of MOST.
- Sufficient services are available, including a variety of programs, experiences, and opportunities, to meet the diverse needs of children and families. Children and families can utilize the services without barriers of transportation or cost.
- Children and youth participate in programs and

experiences that are of the highest quality possible and are continually improving.

- Staff have access to training and professional development opportunities.
- A community infrastructure that includes funding strategies, coordination of technical assistance and training services for programs and staff, long-term planning, advocacy and outreach, and accountability exists to support and sustain a system of after-school programs and links to other citywide and state efforts as appropriate.

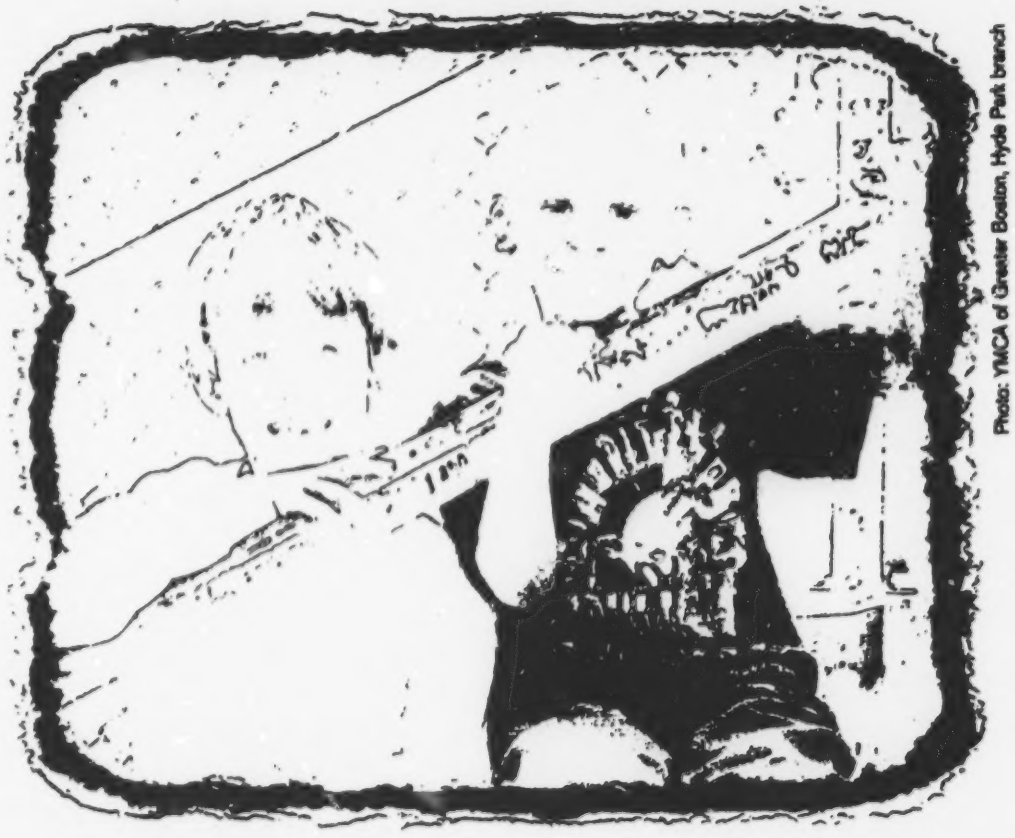

Photo: YMCA of Greater Boston, Hyde Park branch

Phase 1: Planning

Establish leadership and credibility

The first step in the process of building a community-based, collaborative out-of-school time system is to establish appropriate leadership. Not every organization has the capacity or credibility to spearhead and manage a broad-based initiative. The first criterion is that the organization can function as an intermediary and is perceived by the larger group of stakeholders as neutral and not having a vested interest in a particular outcome or direction, especially one that would benefit the organization. (See p. 9 for functions of a local intermediary.) Well-established and reputable community-based organizations, advocacy groups, or community foundations are good candidates for leading an out-of-school time initiative. They give the mission credibility in the community, leverage their power and experience to find and obtain resources, and can mobilize people in support of the initiative.

The leaders are responsible for bringing aboard partners along the way who will contribute resources and increase the commitment of the program and the community to children and youth. Although this is a collaborative process that involves multiple players from multiple sectors, a core leadership, responsible for carrying out and following through on the planning and implementation phases, must be in place. If the core leadership members are taking on this role in addition to an existing job, it is important that there also be designated (paid or in-kind) staff time to pursue and coordinate the effort.

Action Tips

- Identify a credible convener that helps to develop a governance process for the planning phase.
- Build a task force. The earlier the appropriate people are engaged in the issue, the better. Contact community leaders, child- and youth-serving organizations, advocacy groups, and schools. Solicit the interest and commitment of representatives of higher education, parents, community foundations, law enforcement, and advisory boards.
- Use the power and track record of the group to mobilize people and resources in support of the initiative.
- Allocate resources to coordinate a systemwide initiative with paid leadership and administrative staff.
- Go beyond the usual networks to explore what existing work can be built upon and what new partnerships can be developed.

The functions of a local intermediary:

1. ***Convening and Networking***
   Creating forums for peer networking and professional exchange among practitioners, policy makers, funders and other stakeholders.
2. ***Knowledge Development and Dissemination***
   Helping shape a vision and framework that defines the field; developing assessment tools, training curricula, and other materials and making them broadly available; and brokering access to resources, including funding, technical assistance and training.
3. ***Standards Identification and Setting***
   Working with youth organizations to identify best practices, relevant staff competencies, and resulting outcomes for youth.
4. ***Training***
   Locating and creating training programs, developing consortia, providing training directly, and referring organizations to other sources for training.
5. ***Management Assistance***
   Performing such management functions as payroll, accounting, and legal assistance; providing information on funding and raising and regranting funds for designated purposes; providing organizational development assistance on topics including board development, financial and facilities management and information technology.
6. ***Advocacy and Representation***
   Representing the contributions and needs of the field to government, private funders, and others on issues including funding, policy formation and legislation.
7. ***Accountability***
   Helping develop assessment guides and monitoring processes; participating in program documentation; and providing evaluation oversight and management.

Wynn, J. The Role of Local Intermediary Organizations in the Youth Development Field, Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2000.

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Phase 1:
Planning

- *Establish leadership and credibility*
- *Engage the community*
- *Develop guiding principles*

Phase 1:
Planning

- *Establish leadership and credibility*
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"MOST has extended its arms to include everyone who conducts programming for school-age kids including schools, park districts, churches, and single site programs. MOST has created a system of communication among programs so we can all have access to technical assistance, support and mini grants. We feel like we're part of a large support network and not in this by ourselves."

– Curtis Peace, Carol Robertson Center for Learning, Chicago

✧ Gain expertise on current out-of-school time policies, research, best practices, and funding sources. Seek out the knowledge and technical assistance of researchers, educators, and policy makers.

Engage the community

The resounding message from the MOST cities is that having as many voices involved as possible is crucial for success. From the start of any new program, it is clearly essential to include the leadership and guidance of the people who work and live in the community.

The goal is to bring stakeholders at a variety of levels together to develop an understanding of how out-of-school time is viewed by the community and to raise awareness about why out-of-school time opportunities are important for children and families. The feedback gained during this phase should be used to link potential partners and to inform the guiding principles in the next section.

Action Tips

✧ Target future partners now by identifying and enlisting allies early on. Be sure to include youth groups, after-school care providers, parents, interfaith organizations, community-based organizations, local resource and referral agencies, schools, community colleges, cultural institutions, tenants' rights groups, the office of human services, leaders in public housing, and the mayor's office.

✧ Hold informational meetings and community focus groups and convene working groups that reach the broadest base possible, targeting underserved populations. Whenever possible, the local leaders within each community should host events with the intent to create working relationships, raise awareness, and generate support for meeting the needs of children, youth, and families. Creating provider support groups where few existed in Boston and Chicago developed a constituency for program improvement efforts and continued local involvement in the activities of MOST.

✧ Garner the attention and support of elected officials in your community and state by appealing to issues that they champion and giving examples of how after-school programs can have a positive impact on those issues.

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Phase 1:
Planning

- *Establish leadership and credibility*
- *Engage the community*
- *Develop guiding principles*

Boston Model

Boston MOST convened stakeholders in ongoing networking groups that have become valuable mechanisms for informing the work of MOST, as well as the work of the stakeholders who participate in these groups. Some of these groups functioned as task forces that disbanded upon completion of the task at hand, and others have become part of Boston's out-of-school time infrastructure.

For example, the Strengthening Programs Working Group (SPWG), which began as the School-Age Child Care Providers Networking Group in 1992, has forged relationships and built a citywide network of school-age program providers and representatives from cultural institutions, city and state agencies, foundations that fund youth and family initiatives, and other community-based agencies that contribute resources to and/or work on issues that the out-of-school time community faces. SPWG continues to attract and engage new stakeholders. The group meets monthly during the school year and shares information on resources and best practices, hosts speakers, plans training events, and functions as a vital forum for dialogue on the opportunities and challenges of meeting the needs of Boston's children and their families for affordable, high-quality out-of-school time programming.

Seattle Model

Seattle has a long history of effectively supporting licensed school-age care programs. As a result of MOST, Seattle has broadened its constituency beyond licensed programs to include exempt programs, or those that fall outside of licensing parameters, which can include those that offer drop-in or closed enrollment, sports, cultural activities, art, music, tutoring, community service, and more. In response to the needs of these programs, MOST has been working to adapt its technical assistance models and other program quality supports. Experience has affirmed the effectiveness of using these models in a broad range of programs.

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Phase 1:
Planning

- *Establish leadership and credibility*
- *Engage the community*
- *Develop guiding principles*

"The narrower the base, the easier it is to unify, but the less credible the collaboration will be to the rest of the community. Successful collaborations balance unity and diversity."
(Mizrahi, 1999)

Develop guiding principles

The tremendous growth of interest in recent years in children's out-of-school time has generated an increase in the variety of philosophies and approaches that influence how out-of-school time should be spent. Many communities face differences of opinion on what the goal of after-school programs should be. Should the time be used to enhance and enrich the school day? Or should after-school programs help kids to learn social skills, develop talents they might not have time to explore in the school day, or participate in sports or arts activities? The goal is to define the specific needs of the community and to build consensus in the leadership on how to shape services to best meet those needs.

Building and maintaining a broad-based system means collaborating with groups or individuals with whom you have previously competed for resources, with whom your philosophies and strategies differ, or with whom you have had no previous working relationship. "Good coalition builders and collaborators look for ways to expand networks and connections among groups for both practical and philosophical reasons, although the more diversity wanted or needed, the more difficult it will be to agree upon goals and strategies." (Mizrahi, 1999). Establishing a unified approach that reaches broadly across the community means working through differences in philosophy and language and finding values and ideas in common.

Action Tips

- Develop a system for governance and decision making. It is important to have a clear understanding of who makes which decisions and how they are made.
- Collaborations need strong managers. Although it may seem contrary, even collaborative groups need someone to take charge and provide sound leadership in order for the initiative to run effectively. A manager can facilitate meetings, create and update mailing lists, make phone calls to prospective partners, make on-the-spot decisions when necessary, and delegate and support tasks.
- Develop ground rules for meetings that allow ideas to be discussed fairly, safely, and without criticism. Building common values takes time and trust.
- Begin to build a common vocabulary. For example, many terms such as *extended day, after school, out-of-school time,* and *homework clubs* are used to describe programs and experiences that take place primarily after school; agree on a common term that includes a wide range of experiences. For planning purposes you may want to use the term *out-of-school time programs,* which encompasses before school, after school, school holidays and vacations, weekends, and summers.

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- Use the experiences of other community initiatives in your state or elsewhere to inform your plan and to stay focused on meeting the needs identified by your community.
- Build on common values and ideas to form an action plan. Devise strategies to maintain the gains you achieve by thinking about sustainability from the outset.
- Reevaluate often. Include a review of goals and accomplishments regularly, and remember to celebrate both small and large victories.

Seattle Model

Seattle MOST learned that although community involvement and collaboration significantly increase the time needed to implement strategies, they are valuable as well as highly rewarding. Collaborative planning increases the capacity of both individuals and organizations to work effectively; builds trust as well as a shared identity and commitment toward achieving common goals; encourages involvement from diverse individuals and organizations, which enables MOST to reach its target populations; and facilitates building a sense of community ownership.

Phase 2: Taking Stock

Conduct an assessment of community needs

The purpose of the assessment is to develop an understanding of the out-of-school time landscape in your community. Are children's needs being met? Does the supply of programs meet the needs of families? Are there gaps in service? Are specific populations or neighborhoods underserved? Is cost or transportation a significant barrier? Are programs well staffed and of high quality?

Collecting data on where school-age children go after school and how they spend their time may be a challenging process, because families often make a variety of arrangements. Look beyond regulated, registered programs and be sure to tap into the unlicensed and license-exempt programs, as well as formal and informal care systems, when collecting data.

Action Tips

- Find out what services and resources are already in place in the community that can contribute to building an out-of-school time system.
- Use data from potential collaborative partners (e.g., schools, resource and referral agencies, citywide early childhood organizations, juvenile justice departments, and social services) to help you obtain information such as which services already exist, how many low-income families need services, and what areas of your city are underserved.
- Read between the lines: for example, some communities have an adequate supply of out-of-school time programs on paper, but transportation or cost can be a significant barrier to access for children and families.
- Determine the specific needs in your community and be prepared to collect such information on an ongoing basis.

Phase 2:
Taking Stock:

- *Conduct an assessment of community needs*
- *Evaluate and share data from needs assessment*

Boston Model

The survey on the need for school-age child care in Boston was conducted as part of a campaign led by Parents United for Child Care (PUCC), the lead agency of Boston MOST, to increase the supply of child care and after-school programs. The survey yielded concrete results, and PUCC was able to make recommendations for improving the after-school opportunities for children and youth in Boston.

In response to requests by advocates, parents, and representatives of Boston planning groups, research on the supply of school-age child care was conducted. After receiving permission from the Boston Public School system and the Catholic School Office, the survey was distributed to 4,913 families with elementary school children at ten Boston public schools and six Archdiocese schools across the city. Particular schools were selected to provide a geographic and racially representative survey sample. The surveys were printed in English, Spanish, and Chinese and distributed according to the population enrollments at each school.

This project confirmed the need to get a better picture of the parent demand for services in Boston. In compiling the information on the availability of school-age programs, the authors found that the available supply could accommodate only 5 percent of the school-age population in Boston.

Seattle Model

Information for the needs and strengths assessment was gathered from "Community Partners" meetings, with broad representation from a diverse group of community members such as law enforcement, local cultural organizations, public schools, child care providers, youth organizations, church representatives, youth, and parents.

Thirty focus groups were held throughout the city with a total of 300 youth ages 5 to 14 and 185 parents attending, including low-income families, families of color, and families that spoke limited English. Some focus groups were conducted in or translated into languages other than English including Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Mandarin, Laotian, Russian, and several African languages. Additionally, 150 parents who had contacted Child Care Resources, parents applying for child care subsidies from the City of Seattle, and parents with children in the Parks and Recreation Department programs completed surveys.

Three focus groups were held with licensed school-age care providers and representatives from local community colleges to discuss professional development. Input was also gathered from family child care providers, licensed centers, and Parks and Recreation staff on their professional development needs.

Phase 2:
Taking Stock:

- *Conduct an assessment of community needs*
- *Evaluate and share data from needs assessment*

Evaluate and share data from needs assessment

Examine the results of your assessment. What is the overall supply? What is the demand? Where are the gaps? Where are the gaps caused by difficulty in accessing the existing supply? Were underserved neighborhoods, communities, or population groups such as special needs or language groups identified? Explore existing and potential resources and begin to prioritize steps for action.

Share what has been learned from the assessment with all relevant agencies, partnerships, organizations, government (local and state), schools, and parents. Use the data to raise public awareness and generate public support and to search for and secure partnerships and funding.

Action Tips

- ✧ Design a presentation based on the findings to present at public events and conferences.
- ✧ Hold a press conference or community forum to which all stakeholders are invited and share the findings.
- ✧ Publicize the findings.
- ✧ Use the findings as a rationale for funding requests.

Chicago Model

Results of Chicago's needs assessment indicated that increasing program supply was a top priority. A partnership between Chicago MOST and the Chicago Parks District allowed for the creation of 40 new out-of-school time program sites. Chicago MOST was careful to examine its needs assessment data to identify areas where gaps in service were greatest in order to best serve communities in need and not overlap with existing services.

Seattle Model

Seattle MOST made its supply study data come alive by creating a database of programs and out-of-school time activities that is available as a user-friendly guide on the Internet (www.ci.seattle.wa.us/MOST/search/default.htm). The guide gives detailed descriptions of the various school-age programs and activities available in Seattle. The viewing public can search for programs based on language, cultural needs, neighborhood, and other criteria. The site was well marketed and has achieved such success that Seattle MOST received a grant to publish a free printed version for those without access to the Internet.

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Set the agenda

Your agenda should be informed by your guiding principles, the results of your assessment, the human resources at your disposal, and the availability of and prospects for funding. Keep in mind that the ultimate goal of the MOST approach is to build a stable, proactive system that facilitates collaboration and resource sharing in the interest of meeting community needs for children, youth, and families during out-of-school time.

New opportunities may emerge that could shift the focus of your original plan or add new elements to it, as in the following three examples. When AmeriCorps identified after-school programs as a priority area for service, Boston MOST applied for funds to hire AmeriCorps volunteers to work both in Boston programs and with the lead agency, PUCC, to create programming materials. When the state of Washington issued a request for proposals (RFP) for child care services, Seattle MOST applied and received funds to export the concept of MOST to other areas of the state. When the American Business Collaborative was interested in providing training to after-school care providers in the Chicago suburbs, Chicago MOST exported some of its best training ideas and went on the road. It is important to remain open to new partnerships and connections that can expand capacity.

Phase 3: Making it Happen

Action Tips

- ✧ Take advantage of unexpected opportunities. New partnerships, funding sources, and media exposure are some examples of ways in which "opportunity knocks." Much can be gained from being open to the unexpected and by partnering with organizations in new and creative ways.
- ✧ Examine how existing financial commitments from the state and city contribute to achieving program goals. Identify gaps and overlaps and areas of need for new funding.
- ✧ Establish short-term goals to meet immediate needs and others to achieve long-term change.

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Photo: Girls Inc., YWCA Seattle,WA

Boston Model

In response to a parent survey that revealed that affordable after-school programming was a primary concern of parents and beyond the reach of many, Boston MOST established its first major grants initiative in 1992: the Affordability Grants Program. Affordability Grants make it possible for children from low- and moderate-income families who otherwise would not be able to afford quality school-age child care to participate in before- and after-school programs. These three-year grants are awarded to out-of-school time programs in Boston to support existing and new affordable slots.

Seattle Model

Seattle MOST gave the responsibility of prioritizing out-of-school time needs to the community. Forty grassroots organizations were chosen to process data from the needs assessment and then generate a ballot questionnaire. Through massive marketing and outreach, Seattle MOST engaged the local population to vote on and prioritize their needs, ensuring that consensus came from the community. Results of voting helped Seattle MOST to prioritize steps for its action plan in carrying out its agenda for the community. To guide implementation of the agenda, a community oversight group comprising 35 representatives from care providers, schools, businesses, and law enforcement was created.

Plan for sustainability from the beginning: look for partnerships and funding

If you are just starting out, your goal should be to establish a proven track record and build credibility. These two components are key to attracting people and resources to your initiative. Increase your experience and accomplishments by partnering with other organizations or initiatives. Once you begin accumulating accomplishments, you will have the power to seek and attract funding for the other important issues on your agenda.

Sustaining your initiative will be an ongoing process of forming partnerships and locating funds. Both long- and short-term partnerships will constitute the out-of-school time system. Some partners may become a permanent part of the community leadership by taking on responsibility for the growth of the system; others may be involved temporarily by providing funding or donating services.

Form partnerships with leaders from diverse sectors in your community, such as local government, law enforcement, after-school programs, schools, and foundations, as well as leaders from the ethnic, racial, and religious groups that make up your community. Each will contribute a unique perspective on serving children and youth and a particular means for locating funds. Ultimately, the more voices on board, the broader the impact your initiative can make.

Part of planning for sustainability involves understanding how to use resources most effectively. For example, in Boston's Affordability Grants Program, funders' contributions are pooled together to create a large network of support that helps hundreds of programs and thousands of children. In addition to receiving a grant to create more slots for children in programs, grantees receive training for program improvement, fundraising, and sustainability and are required to seek additional sources of financial support. Funders are attracted to this type of comprehensive program because the impact of their contributions is broad and long term.

Build a coherent system by finding ways to link new funding opportunities to current projects and goals. Each MOST city has found links in its work to other community collaborative initiatives concerning issues such as literacy, health, crime prevention, education reform, service learning, and other outreach initiatives. This approach maximizes management capacity and broadens program-level impact.

Be flexible. Changes in public opinion about what children and families need will affect funding sources. At the time of MOST's inception, out-of-school time was not a high priority area for the public or funders. Today, public support and funding have grown tremendously, increasing both opportunities and competition for resources.

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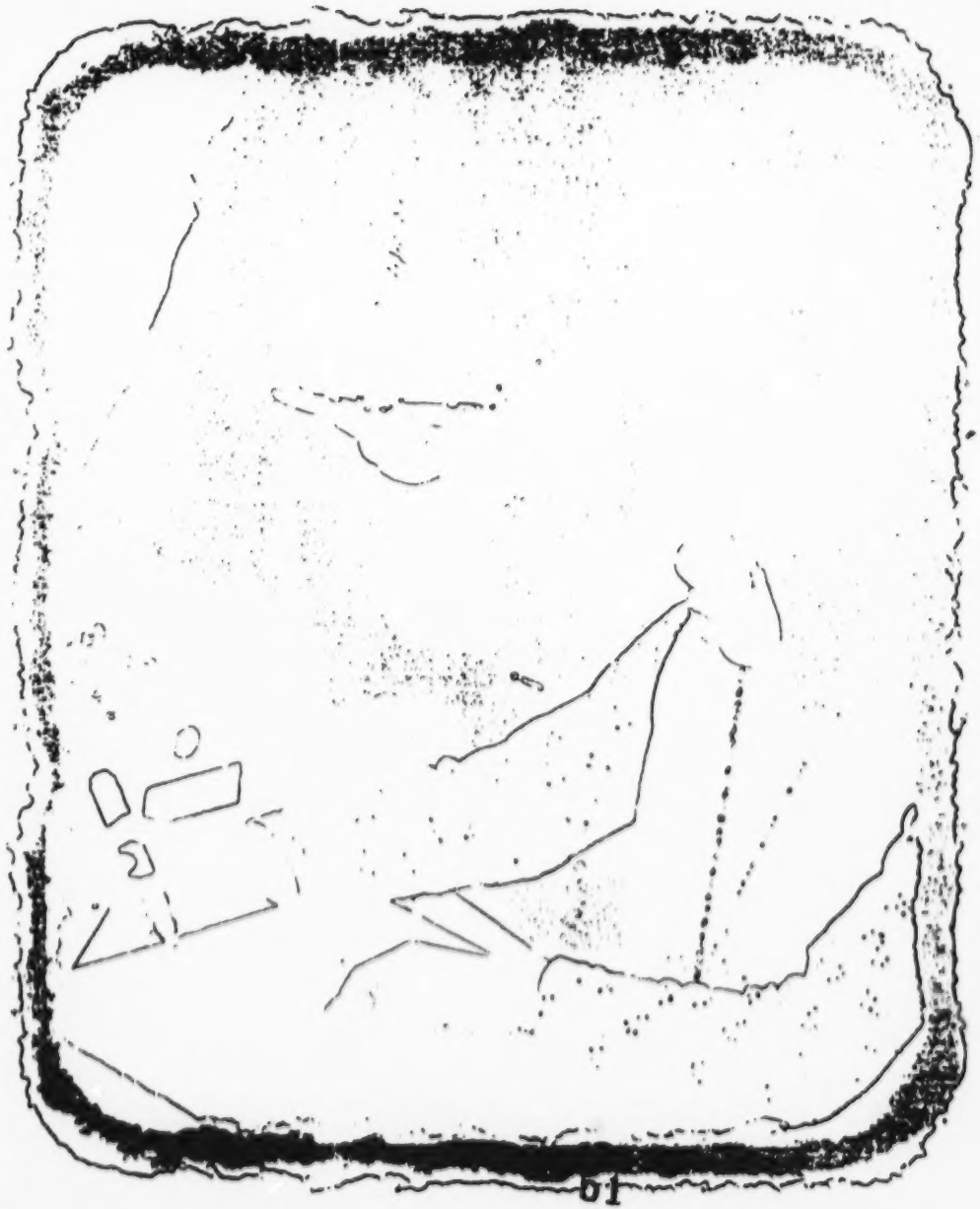
"Building a diverse base of local and national funding is absolutely critical for sustainability."

– Elaine Fersh, Executive Director of Parents United for Child Care, Boston

Every participant contributes time and resources when working as part of a community collaboration, and so funding for coordination is essential.

Action Tips

- ✧ Start small and build a proven track record of accomplishments.
- ✧ Build relationships with funders. Invite them to events and keep them informed of your accomplishments.
- ✧ Attract funding by packaging and selling your accomplishments. Find out which issues potential funders are interested in and demonstrate to them how your initiative is a proactive strategy.
- ✧ Develop a broad base of support.
- ✧ Look for partnerships that are mutually beneficial. For example, cultural institutions such as libraries, parks, and museums are often eager to share resources and are seeking to attract a larger audience to their services.



Boston Model

In spring 1999, PUCC, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (BGCB), NIOST, and the YMCA of Greater Boston joined forces to create an innovative and ambitious training initiative, called Boston 4 Quality, that would enhance the quality of out-of-school time programming in Boston.

Boston 4Quality designed an initiative that included training and technical assistance along with a menu from which each of the provider organizations selected its agenda items for the first year. This design has allowed the collaborative to draw on the strengths of each organization while working together on the challenges that confront the field as a whole, as well as those that are specific to each organization.

Prior to this partnership, each of the four groups was involved in a variety of quality improvement activities, yet differences in language, organizational culture, and even program models were pronounced. From the inception of Boston 4Quality in 1999,these four organizations made significant strides toward identifying common concerns, challenges, and goals on which Boston 4Quality could work as a collaborative. Boston 4Quality is now a cohesive group that meets regularly and works cooperatively to identify, develop, and implement this innovative quality improvement initiative. The collaborative nature of the work has also allowed Boston 4Quality partners to benefit from working together at the municipal level by sharing lessons learned and taking advantage of opportunities beyond the scope of any individual organization to bring additional resources and support for quality programming in Boston.

Chicago Model

In 1994, approximately 11,000 spaces were available in Chicago for children across the city needing before- or after-school care. Although at first glance that number might seem adequate, it barely scratched the surface in a city of nearly three million people. To begin addressing this problem, Chicago MOST led a group of local stakeholders in a process to identify resources and partners with the potential to serve large numbers of children in innovative ways.

Their efforts fortuitously coincided with the Chicago Park District's plans to improve neighborhood programs at park facilities and willingness among many of Chicago's cultural institutions to reach out directly to communities. Since then, MOST-supported partnerships between the park district and several of the city's leading museums, theaters, and performing arts groups have added new school-age care spaces for a total of 4,000 individuals in several neighborhoods, through the Park Kids programs.Spaces in school-age programs for hundreds of other children and youth have been created through similar collaborative efforts.

(cont. on p. 22)

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Phase 3:
Making It Happen:

- *Set the agenda*
- *Plan for sustainability from the beginning: look for partnerships and funding*
- *Be visible*
- *Sustain the changes*

"A new collaboration has allowed us to improve reading and writing skills among refugee children through theater and story telling. This method helps them to retain their cultural heritage and improve academics."

– Lynda Llavore, Refugee Women's Alliance, Bilingual Readers Theatre Project, Seattle

Phase 3:
Making It Happen:

- *Set the agenda*
- *Plan for sustainability from the beginning: look for partnerships and funding*
- *Be visible*
- *Sustain the changes*

"The problem is that programs and schools typically work in isolation—even though they're serving the same children. The Linkages project gives programs and schools the resources to join forces and create a seamless support system for young people."

– Sarah Mello Temple,
School's Out Consortium,
Seattle

(cont. from p. 21)

Another way Chicago MOST supports collaborations among cultural organizations and service providers is through Program Enhancement Grants. One of these grants made it possible for a social service agency to team up with the Chicago Academy of Science, a local theater company, and a percussion performance group to offer a multidisciplinary summer day camp program for 100 young people, through the Neighborhood Network project.

Seattle Model

Neighborhood-focused school reform and increased recognition of important learning opportunities during non-school hours prompted Seattle schools and out-of-school time programs to acknowledge the benefit of working together to support young people's development and academic success. In collaboration with the Seattle Human Services Department, Seattle MOST has implemented the Programs/Schools Linkages Project. Six grants totaling $105,000 were awarded to help schools and out-of-school time programs work together to improve school performance as well as support children's social, emotional, and physical development.

The Linkages Project gives each program school "partnership team" $17,500 over two years. During that time, the teams link traditional school-day activities with extended-day activities, plus develop a model set of policies, standards, and activities that are common to both school and out-of-school time providers. Previously, no policies or framework existed for linking the work of the two systems. The policies and standards the partnership teams create can be used as models by other programs and schools.

The teams also work to increase culturally appropriate programming and family involvement. Because parents pick up their children directly from the out-of-school time program, they often see the care providers more regularly than they see their children's school teachers. The partnership teams use this relationship to better inform families about their children's progress in school and increase overall communication and family involvement in the programs and schools.

The lessons learned from this project have now been incorporated in a districtwide (96-school) effort to strengthen partnerships between school-based programs and schools in supporting academic standards. The hope is that in the future these partnerships will positively affect not only school-based after-school programs but community-based programs as well.

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Be visible

Increasing the public's awareness about the need for high-quality, accessible opportunities for children and youth helps build the support necessary to sustain your work. The MOST cities have focused on public awareness in a variety of ways, including newsletters, press conferences and releases, hosting community forums on specific topics for parents and providers, or by making MOST presentations to key organizations (e.g., the local public television station, libraries, cultural centers, and business collaboratives). In addition, each city has been involved in a formal public awareness campaign. The Afterschool Alliance, funded by the Charles Stewart MOTT Foundation, has been created to take on the task nationally of developing and disseminating tools and campaigns that communities can implement across the country. (See the Resource section for more information.)

The more you can increase awareness in your community concerning out-of-school time issues, the more likely you will be able to gather the support and resources you need to achieve long-range goals. The convergence of many efforts at the local, state, and national level will ensure maximum exposure for issues concerning out-of-school time and have a long-term impact in your community.

Action Tips

- ✧ Know how to pitch your initiative to multiple and diverse audiences.
- ✧ Talk publicly about your accomplishments at local and national events.
- ✧ Stay abreast of new research and emerging trends.

Sustain the changes

The key to sustaining your accomplishments is the presence of a committed group actively working toward clearly defined goals. Although the initiatives in the three MOST cities have expanded to include multiple partners, derivative organizations, initiatives, and projects that individually manage specific activities, each lead agency remains central to the leadership and vision of the growing system. The leaders continuously work with all stakeholders to improve the quality of services for children and families, and with an eye on the big picture, assess needs and make adjustments to the delivery of services based on new trends and increasing demand.

The following are a few examples of how some of MOST's early partners have taken responsibility for pieces the emerging system:

Boston MOST has become the Boston School Age Child Care Project (BSACCP), a permanent part of

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Phase 3:
Making It Happen:

- *Set the agenda*
- *Plan for sustainability from the beginning: look for partnerships and funding*
- *Be visible*
- *Sustain the changes*

"MOST has helped child care providers in Boston become far more sophisticated in their knowledge of out-of-school time issues. This has been evident in the types of trainings and other professional development opportunities that providers are asking for and helping to design."

– Tania Buck, Parents United for Child Care, Boston

Parents United for Child Care (PUCC), its lead agency. Under the leadership of the Massachusetts School Age Coalition, BSACCP is one of the partners who are developing the Professional Advancement for School-Age Staff Initiative (PASS). The goal of the Initiative is to support professional development in the school-age provider field by creating a system of career development, including a career lattice, competencies, and preparation for a credential that will lead to increased compensation. PUCC has created the Working Group on Out-of-School Time Finance, a statewide financing group that has documented the existing government and private funding available for both programs and systems supporting after-school services. The resulting document and community buy-in that evolved from that process is becoming the basis for a statewide legislative campaign to provide ongoing funding for after-school programs (See resource section for citation).

Chicago MOST has become an expanded program of the Day Care Action Council of Illinois, its lead agency. The Chicago Park District, a major partner, has created its own training program for providers, Chicago Park District University. The curriculum includes MOST trainings and college coursework from the Illinois Community College Board school-age curriculum, which was approved in 1999 as a result of MOST efforts. The Mayor has restructured the Chicago Department of Human Services and school-age programs are now a part of the Chicago for Youth Office, which is staffed by a MOST partner. Chicago for Youth is providing leadership of a citywide task force that will build on MOST strategies to enhance program quality and increase professional development activities for school-age and youth programs in Chicago. A new partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services Teen REACH Program has resulted in staff development activities for community based youth programs and created new partnerships with agencies serving older kids.

Seattle MOST's lead agency, School's Out Consortium, continues to build and diversify its on-site staff training system and maintains a strong coordinating, planning, and advocacy role as the funded part of the Initiative runs down. Seattle Central Community College has continued to develop an after-school/youth work credential. MOST's early partner, Child Care Resources, maintains the newly developed and expanded database of out-of-school time programs as well as a web site. The Mayor's office, staffed by a pioneer and leader of MOST, leads a citywide initiative for children, and youth up to 18 years of age called Project Lift-Off.

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Looking Back

In 2001, looking back on six years of dynamic, community-driven plans in Boston, Chicago, and Seattle, it is gratifying to see that many elements of an out-of-school time system have been firmly established in each city. More young people, especially those who were previously underserved, now have positive opportunities that their older siblings may not have had.

The thoughtful approach of listening to the needs of parents and young people, taking a thorough inventory of program sites and spaces, identifying the gaps in service, and assessing the quality of existing services has served the goals of the MOST Initiative well. The MOST cities now have a tangible awareness of what their communities need and have established mechanisms to meet those needs on an ongoing basis.

The collaborative process, though never easy, has brought a broad base of stakeholders together to build a common agenda that reaches across the community to meet the diverse and changing needs of families. With a clear picture of the existing resources and a vision for the future, the three MOST cities have attracted resources and better opportunities for the children and youth of Boston, Chicago, and Seattle. The community-based, systems-building MOST Initiative is a successful model that can be tailored to help all communities make the most of out-of-school time for children, youth, and families.

MOST city lead agencies and accomplishments:

- Boston MOST
- Chicago MOST
- Seattle MOST

MOST City Lead Agencies

The work of the MOST Initiative was carried out in each city by long-standing, child-focused, community-based organizations. MOST's success is due, in large part, to the commitment and competency of the leaders in those lead agencies and their effectiveness in raising public awareness, brokering relationships, generating broad-based community support, and providing resources to their respective communities.

Parents United for Child Care

30 Winter Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02108-4720
Phone (617) 426-8288
FAX (617) 542-1515

Founded in 1987, Parents United for Child Care (PUCC) is a grassroots membership organization of low- and moderate-income parents committed to increasing the supply of quality, affordable child care in Massachusetts. PUCC works with families within their own communities to mobilize the most relevant constituent voice to advocate for child care needs. PUCC seeks to make sustainable, broad-based changes in the quality, availability, and affordability of child care. Therefore, the organization strongly embraces partnerships and collaborative work with all stakeholders, including schools; child care providers; the city, state, and federal governments; and, most importantly, parents and families.

In Boston, the MOST Initiative has:

- Provided staff development opportunities through training, forums, a directors' support group, and a program improvement support group, as well as support for staff working toward an associate's degree that includes the APEX Certificate in School Age Child Care.
- Provided start-up grants, technical assistance, and training through the Opening Doors Initiative to support development of new school-based out-of-school time programs.
- Taken a leading role in a statewide School-Age Child Care Professional Development Committee, which is developing a system of professional development linked to compensation throughout the Commonwealth.

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- Increased access for low- and moderate-income families by 1,500 slots by awarding multiyear Affordability Grants to more than 142 programs in 16 neighborhoods.
- Provided $463,000 in facilities grants to nine programs in 1998: four expansion grants created 133 new after-school slots, and five grants supported critical facility improvements.
- Supported program start-up through an initiative to provide training, technical assistance, and start-up grant awards to elementary and middle schools.
- Supported AmeriCorps members working on quality improvement initiatives focused on literacy, inclusion, and cultural competency.
- Developed and supported a team of Quality Advisors who provide technical assistance to programs working toward quality improvement.

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MOST city lead agencies and accomplishments:

- ~~Boston MOST~~
- *Chicago MOST*
- *Seattle MOST*

MOST city lead agencies and accomplishments:

- Boston MOST
- Chicago MOST
- Seattle MOST

Day Care Action Council of Illinois

Day Care Action Council of Illinois
4802 N. Broadway, Suite 205
Chicago, IL 60640
Phone (773) 564-8780
FAX (773) 275-5929

Founded in 1969, Day Care Action Council of Illinois (DCACI) is dedicated to the promotion and expansion of quality child care in Illinois. While its mission has remained the same since its inception, DCACI has expanded its activities to meet the burgeoning needs of working families and to make the most of gains made in the policy arena. Starting as a small, volunteer advocacy agency, DCACI has grown into a multifaceted organization, providing services to more than 250,000 families each year and employing a staff of more than 200.

In Chicago, the MOST Initiative has:

- Provided staff development opportunities for over 1,200 school-age professionals through training, college courses, conferences, and tuition reimbursement.
- Developed school-age and youth worker competencies to create a set of standards for working with children.
- Awarded program improvement grants to out-of-school time programs, enhancing cultural and educational opportunities for more than 8,850 school-age children.
- Partnered with the Chicago Park District to create 41 Park Kids programs for over 4,000 children.
- Strengthened the capacities of over 200 diverse out-of-school time providers through Neighborhood Networking open houses to create linkages with cultural institutions, community-based organizations, and neighborhood businesses.
- Collaborated with the Illinois Facilities Fund to improve school-age program indoor environments through "makeovers" and published a space planning manual based on lessons learned.
- Implemented the Quality Improvement Project, which includes technical assistance, training, and a program improvement grant, for 13 school-age programs.
- Hired four full-time school-age care consultants to provide technical assistance to programs, develop and promote the resource library, and improve the resource and referral database

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Seattle MOST

School's Out Consortium/YWCA
801 23rd Ave S., Suite A
Seattle, WA 98144
Phone (206) 323-2396
FAX (206) 323-7997

The School's Out Consortium is a community partnership dedicated to coordinating resources for the development of a comprehensive, high-quality system of out-of-school time activities for children and youth, ages 5 to 14, in Washington State. Started in 1987 through a grant awarded to the City of Seattle, School's Out has continued to grow under the auspices of the YWCA of Seattle–King County since 1988.

In Seattle, the MOST Initiative has:

- ✧ In partnership with other child advocacy groups achieved several legislative victories that increased funding for Washington's out-of-school time programs by $5 million.
- ✧ Increased program accessibility for over 2,500 low-income children and youth, particularly from immigrant and refugee families, by creating and expanding out-of-school time programs that meet their needs.
- ✧ Helped Seattle families find quality out-of-school time programs by developing a youth activities database on the Internet and distributing 35,000 printed directories that list programs by neighborhood.
- ✧ Expanded professional development options and improved skills for staff through college classes, mentor projects, community workshops, and an on-site training and development of a college certificate program.
- ✧ Strengthened partnerships between schools and out-of-school time programs by jointly designing dedicated school-age care space and by training staff to infuse recreational reading strategies into their out-of-school time programs.
- ✧ Raised public awareness and facilitated community involvement in supporting out-of-school time care and its positive outcomes.

MOST city lead agencies and accomplishments:

- *Boston MOST*
- *Chicago MOST*
- *Seattle MOST*

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Resources:

- *Publications from the MOST Initiative*
- *Out-of-school time resources*
- *Out-of-school time organizations*
- *Bibliography*

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Resources

Papers from the MOST Initiative

Literacy: Exploring Strategies to Enhance Learning in Out-of-School Time, by Kathryn Hynes, Susan O'connor & An-Me Chung. This paper explores different ways that after-school programs can support children's literacy development. Grounded in research, the paper includes information on how children learn to read, many strategies for promoting literacy skills and descriptions of model programs. 1999.

Homework Assistance & Out-of-School Time: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance, by Kate Maguire & Susan O'Connor. This paper is designed to help out-of-school time programs think through their role in providing homework assistance. 1998. A small booklet which summarizes the main points in the research paper is also available.

The Road to SAC Professionalism: Emerging Models, Trends and Issues in Credentialing, by Liz Nilsen. This paper presents and discusses results from a nation-wide survey conducted on current state efforts toward establishing school-age credentials. 1998.

Credentialing in Out-of-School Time Programs: A Discussion Paper by Gwen G. Morgan. This paper discusses the potential role for credentialing in the field of out-of-school time. Includes a definition of credentialing and its place within a career development system and suggests why out-of-school time programs, providers, and the government might find credentials to be of value. 1998.

Building a Professional Development System that Works for the Field of Out-of-School Time, by Joan Costley. This paper introduces the key elements of a professional development system. It discusses questions and issues which must be addressed in order to create an acessible, viable and useful system of professional development for the out-of-school time field. 1998.

Growing Together: Connections Between the School-Age Care and Youth Work Professions, by Marie Esposito. This paper reports on the emergence of an unanticipated, strong connection between the school-age and youth service fields that occurred during the first year of MOST's implementation. 1997.

Professional Development in School-Age Care: A Conceptual Framework. This paper provides an overview of the various professional development initiatives across the United States and proposes a framwork which outlines the components of such a system. 1995.

Videos from the MOST Initiative

A Place of Their Own: Designing Quality Space for Out-of-School Time. This video and accompanying implementation guide, demonstrate effective strategies for planning and designing quality space for out-of-school time programs. 2001.

Making the MOST of Out-of-School Time: The Human Side of Quality. This video portrays the importance of the relationships that children develop in out-of-school time programs. 1999.

To order publications, please call 781-283-2510

Out-of-school time resources

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Mitchell, A., Stoney L., & Dichter, H. *Financing Child Care in the United States, An Expanded Catalog of Current Strategies.* Kauffman Foundation, 2001.

National Association of Elementary School Principals. After-School Programs and the K-8 Principal Standards for Quality School-Age Care *Revised Edition.* Alexandria, VA: author. 1999.

National School Age Care Alliance. NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care. Boston, MA: author. 1998.

Sylvester, K. & Reich K. *After-School Programs Issues & Ideas.* The Future of Children. Washington, D.C.: David and Lucille Packard Foundation. November, 2000.

Walter K., Caplan, J., & McElvain, C. *Beyond the Bell: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After School Programs.* North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), 2000.

Wechsler, S., Kershaw, A., Fersh, E., & Bundy, A. *Meeting the Challenge Financing Out-of-School Time Programming in Boston and Massachusetts.* Parents United for Child Care, March 2001.

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Resources:

- *Publications from the MOST Initiative*
- *Out-of-school time resources*
- *Out-of-school time organizations*
- *Bibliography*

Out-of-school time organizations, initiatives and advocates

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21stCCLC), authorized under Title X, Part I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provides expanded learning opportunities for participating children in a safe, drug-free and supervised environment. **www.ed.gov/21stcclc**

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) administers the major federal programs that support: social services that promote the positive growth and development of children, youth and their families; protective services and shelter for children and youth in at-risk situations; child care for working families and families on public assistance; and adoption for children with special needs. These programs provide financial assistance to states, community-based organizations, and academic institutions to provide services, carry out research and demonstration activities and undertake training, technical assistance, and information dissemination. **www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/acyf**

Afterschool Alliance is an alliance of public, private and nonprofit groups committed to raising awareness and expanding resources for afterschool programs. Initiated and currently coordinated by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Alliance grew out of a partnership between the Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education. Initial partners are the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, JCPenney, Advertising Council, Entertainment Industry Foundation, Creative Artists Agency Foundation and People Magazine. **www.afterschoolalliance.org**

Afterschool.gov is a clearinghouse of federal resources that support out-of-school time providers, programs and advocates. **www.afterschool.gov**

The After School Learning Initiative works in partnership with other organizations to add value to the after school field by further developing knowledge about key stakeholder groups and issues, and by promoting strategic use of information to improve the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of after school programs across the nation. **http://gseweb.harvard.edu/%7Ehfrp/afterschool/intro.html**

The Center for the Child Care Workforce is a nonprofit, research, education and advocacy organization committed to improving child care quality by upgrading the compensation, working conditions and training of child care teachers and family child care providers. **www.ccw.org**

Child Care Bureau administers federal funds to states, territories, and tribes to assist low-income families in accessing quality child care for children when the parents work or participate in education or training **www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb**

Children's Defense Fund (CDF) provides a strong, effective voice for *all* the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves; with particular attention paid to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investment before they get sick or into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown. **www.childrensdefensefund.org**

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Corporation for National Service (CNS) provides information on a host of government sponsored programs such as Americorps, Learn & Serve, America Reads, National Service Scholarships, and other resource links. **www.cns.gov**

Fight Crime Invest in Kids is a national anti-crime organization led by more than 900 police chiefs, sheriffs, police association presidents, prosecutors, and survivors of violent crime. It is guided by a National Advisory Committee of these leaders and a National Crime and Violence Prevention Resource Council of leading criminologists and child development experts as well as state Advisory Committees. **www.fightcrime.org**

The Finance Project (TFP) is a national initiative to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of public- and private-sector financing for education, other children's services, and community building and development. **www.financeproject.org**

Institute for Educational Leadership (Coalition for Community Schools, CCS) uses public schools as a hub to bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities – before, during and after school, seven days a week. CCS brings together local, state and national organizations that represent individuals and groups engaged in creating and sustaining community schools. **www.communityschools.org**

International Foundation for Youth (IYF) identifies effective programs and approaches to youth development, strengthens their impact, and expands their reach so that many more young people may benefit. IYF works collaboratively with national foundations and organizations currently operating in 27 countries. **www.iyfnet.org**

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) is a professional membership organization for K-8 principals and other education leaders. **www.naesp.org**

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals and others dedicated to improving the quality of early childhood education programs for children birth through age eight. **www.naeyc.org**

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing the most up-to-date and useful information for parents seeking child care, child care professionals, NACCRRA members, and child care advocates. **www.naccrra.net**

National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) advances a multi-faceted agenda to promote and protect the well-being of all African American children. NBCDI's wide range of programs respond to the necessity to replace the one-size-fits-all, deficit-oriented paradigm with initiatives that serve children based on their strengths and needs. **www.nbcdi.org**

National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) was established to complement, enhance and promote child care linkages and to serve as a mechanism for supporting quality comprehensive services for children and families through dissemination and outreach. **www.nccic.org**

National Governor's Association (NGA) *Center for Best Practices* examines innovative state practices that expand and enhance Extra Learning Opportunities (ELO), to assist states in mapping out current resources

Resources:

- *Publications from the MOST Initiative*
- *Out-of-school time resources*
- *Out-of-school time organizations*
- *Bibliography*

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and creating a baseline for future investments in ELO programs. **www.nga.org**

National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College, has successfully brought national attention to the importance of children's out-of-school time, influenced policy, increased standards and professional recognition, and spearheaded community action aimed at improving the availability, quality and viability of programs serving children and youth. NIOST's varied initiatives have moved the field forward using three paths: research, evaluation and consultation, policy development and public awareness, and training and curriculum development. **www.niost.org**

National League of Cities (NLC) was established in 1924 by and for reform-minded state municipal leagues to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. NLC now represents 49 leagues, more than 1,500 member cities, and through the membership of the state municipal leagues, NLC represents more than 18,000 cities and towns of all sizes in total. **www.nlc.org**

National Network for Child Care (NNCC) shares knowledge about children and child care from the vast resources of the land grant universities with parents, professionals, practitioners, and the general public. **www.nncc.org**

National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) with over 8,000 members nationwide, 35 state affiliate organizations, and members in every state, NSACA is the only national membership organization representing the entire array of public, private, school- and community-based providers of before and after school programs. NSACA has created a nationally recognized system of program accreditation; provides a network of support through a registry of members and after-school trainers; publishes the Journal, School-Age Review; conducts an Annual National Conference; and has created a Public Policy Network that collects data, provides Public Policy Updates, and responds at a grass-roots level to Public Policy Action Alerts. **www.nsaca.org**

The National Youth Development Information Center (NYDIC), provides practice-related information about youth development to national and local youth-serving organizations at low cost or no cost. **www.nydic.org**

School-Age Notes develops and provides information, technical assistance and resources for starting and advocating for new after-school programs; ideas for administrating and enhancing the quality of exciting programs; technical assistance and training opportunities; a link with other concerned school-age care professionals and the latest in trends, resources and materials. **www.schoolagenotes.com**

School Age Youth Network (SAYN) is an informal network of advocates for school-age and youth development programs nationwide. Monthly meetings are held to share the latest information on federal policy and legislation and to strategize.

Schools of the 21st Century (21C) was started in 1987 at the Yale Bush Center. 21C's are school-based or school-linked child care and family support programs. The programs serve kids from birth to age twelve, and schools are linked to community resources to build an environment that values children. The programs are located in over 500 schools to date. **www.yale.edu/bushcenter/21C**

Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application through research and evaluation, publications and practical tools, and training and technical assistance. **www.search-institute.org**

USA Child Care unites providers as a leading force in the future direction and accessibility of quality, affordable child care for low- and moderate-income families; represents and works with active statewide organizations of providers across the country to ensure they are informed and engaged; and is an active advocate that provides expertise to legislators and policy makers about how to develop a system of high-quality child care. **www.usachildcare.org**

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Photo: Hawthorne Elementary, Seattle, WA

Our mission is to ensure that all children, youth, and families have access to high quality programs, activities, and opportunities during non-school hours.

About NIOST

We believe that these experiences are essential to the healthy development of children and youth, who then can become effective and capable members of society. Our work bridges the worlds of research, policy and practice.

For over 20 years, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College has successfully brought national attention to the importance of children's out-of-school time, influenced policy, increased standards and professional recognition, and spearheaded community action aimed at improving the availability, quality and viability of programs serving children and youth. NIOST's varied initiatives have moved the field forward using three paths:

- Research, Evaluation and Consultation
- Policy Development and Public Awareness
- Training and Curriculum Development

From its inception, much of NIOST's work has encompassed projects of national scope and influence, many representing "firsts" for the field. A few examples include: the seven-year, systems-building, MOST Initiative; the National Cross Cities Network for Leaders of Citywide After-School Initiatives; the Boston and San Jose 4Quality Initiatives on Balanced Programming; a collaboration on a comprehensive national study of before- and after-school care programs for the U.S. Department of Education; the creation of the National Quality Standards and ASQ self-study process; and provision of nation-wide training and technical assistance on after-school programs for the Corporation for National Service. Many other NIOST projects have involved regional and state-wide efforts.

NIOST is part of the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College. The Wellesley Center for Research on Women and the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies are united in a joint mission to educate, inform and expand our knowledge of women's lives. It is home to an interdisciplinary community of scholars, and theorists engaged in action, research, theory building, publication and training.

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